



THE PUZZLE

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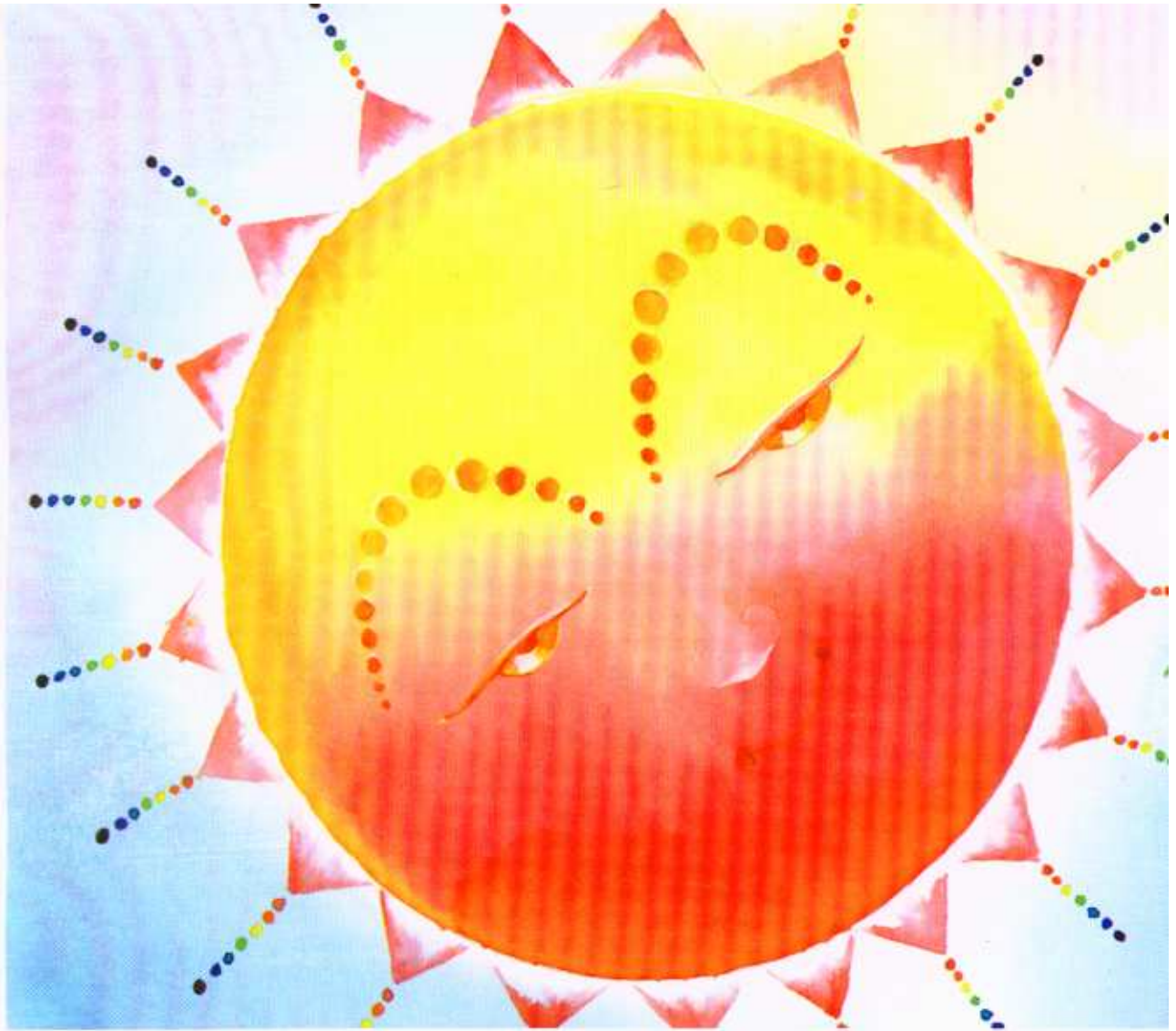
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Munia loves the rising Sun. But, she is puzzled by its unusual behaviour. "The Sun rises from the East and sets down in the West. Then, how does it come out again



from the East;? Sometimes it is very hot and unbearable and sometimes it is warm and very pleasant. Isn't it very strange?" she thinks.



Munia wants to know more about the Sun. She wants to talk about it with her friends. But her companions never pay any attention to her queries. They fly and hop from



one branch to another, chirping, "Chirp, chirp, chirp!"

Munia is very curious. So, one day she flies out to have her own way.



She sees a Swan swimming in a big pond. Settling herself on a bamboo pole standing there, she greets the Swan. "Good morning, Swan Mama! You seem to be in a very good mood." The Swan looks at Munia and replies. "Munia, you're very innocent. Don't you see the



beautiful lotus flowers blooming in the morning sunlight! Isn't it a wonderful sight!"

Munia is thrilled to know about the importance of sunlight. And that it blooms the flowers.

Munia flies again.



She sees Guttu, the pigeon, and asks him about the Sun. Guttu thinks for a while, and says, "Munia, you know that I live in a school building. One day, I saw the teacher

rotating a model of the Earth called the 'globe' on a table. He was telling his students that the Earth spins around on an imaginary line called the axis, on its own. Somewhat like a top. The side facing the Sun is bright, while the other side remains dark. This is how we have day and night. When it is day time in India, it is night in America!"





Munia moves further. Kajari, the cow is grazing in the field. Munia asks her the same question. Kajari raises her head with a loud moo and says, "I do not know much about the Sun but one day my master was telling the children some thing about the weather."

Kajari tries to recall everything and says, "The Earth spins around its axis and orbits the Sun as well. The Earth's axis is not quite at right angles to the Sun. As a result, a certain place gets closer, and then moves farther away from the Sun. When a place gets closer to the Sun, that place becomes very hot, while the place which is not directly facing the Sun remains cold."

"But does this affect us?" enquires Munia.

"Yes. That is why we have different seasons," answers Kajari.



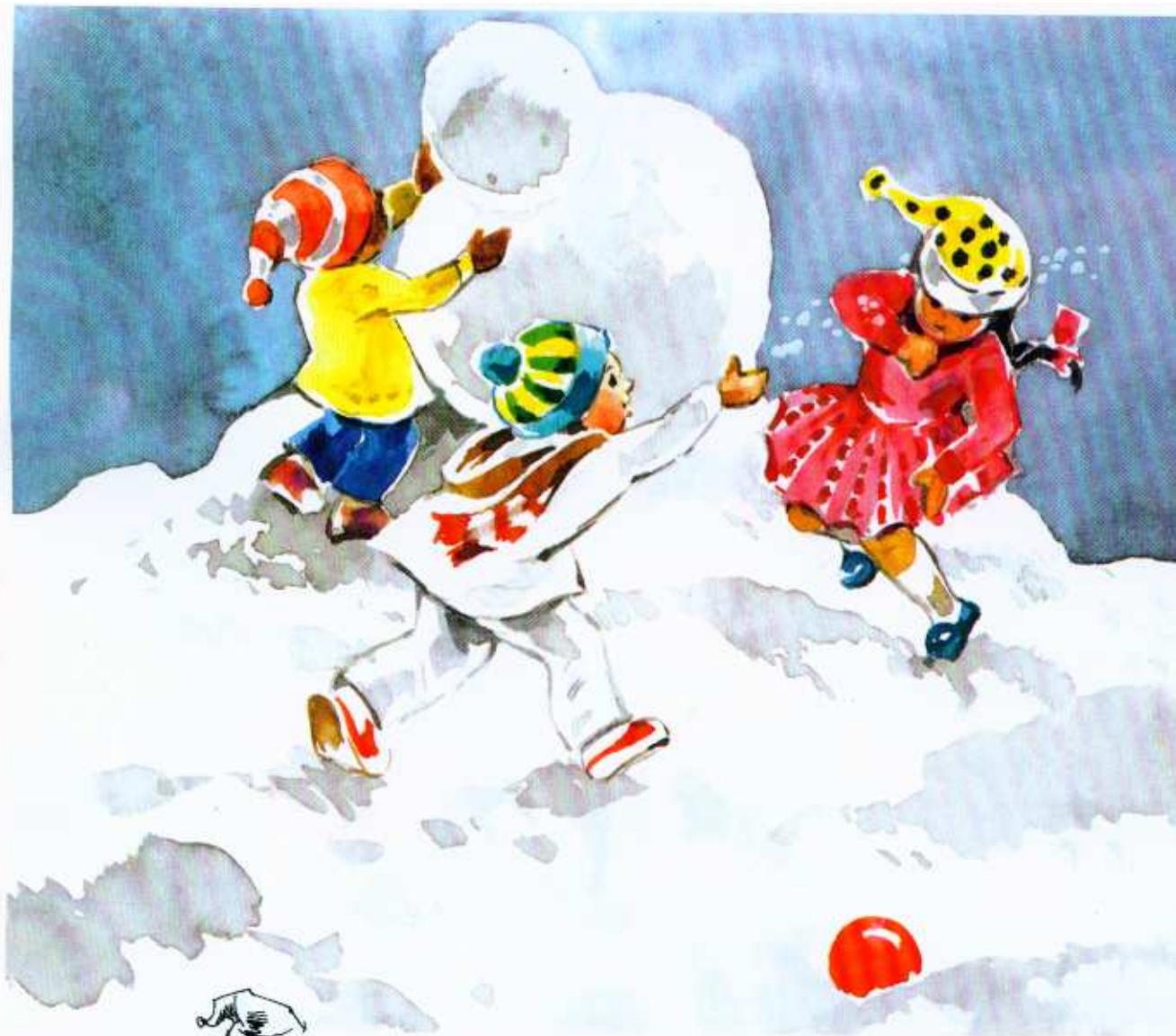


"The summer season is so hot that it becomes difficult to even go out during the noon time. The heat of the Sun becomes scorching. Everybody looks for shade and feasts on ice-cream, You must have seen our village buffaloes swimming in the pond to stay cool!"



"A cool shower welcomes the rainy season. Children love and enjoy the natural shower. The toads come out and sing songs. The green carpet of grass in the gardens twinkles once again. The dark clouds play hide and seek with the Sun. It is a wonderful sight."





"Slowly, the weather starts becoming cooler and the winter season arrives. People switch to hot food and have tea and coffee to keep warm. They wear woollen clothes. The tepid heat of the Sun is loved by everybody."



"After a few months the trees start shedding their leaves and become bare. The ground appears yellowish in colour. The leaves curl and swirl in the air. A strong wind blows away the dried leaves. Thus, the autumn season starts."





“Then follows spring, the most beautiful season. It is neither very hot nor very cold. Small, bright, new leaves begin to decorate the bare trees. The gardens become colourful with blooming flowers. We can see



many kinds of birds, butterflies and insects. Isn't it lovely?" Kajari ends her speech.

Now Munia understands the Sun's mysteries. How the Sun plays different tricks of hide and seek.





But Munia feels tired. She settles on a broken old wall to take some rest. As she looks around, she is amazed.



On one side of the wall the plants are green and healthy while on the other side, the plants are dried and wilted.



Munia sees an old Owl sitting in the hollow of a tree. She asks him also the same question. Opening his dazzled eyes the Owl grumbles, "Munia, to be frank, I



never liked the Sun and do not want to talk about it. Till the time the Sun is in the sky, I prefer to rest. I only like the nights."



It is already evening time. Munia flies back home. She is glad to know so much about the Sun,



Munia is extremely happy. She looks at the setting Sun and feels as if it is smiling at her.



At home, Munia is so excited to tell all her friends the new facts she has learnt. But, all her friends are busy. They don't pay any attention to Munia's words. They don't even have the time to listen to her. "Chirp, chirp, chirp!" they go on.



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